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Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism, BEH, Vol. III

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Śaiva Siddhānta

Just as the → Veda is considered to be the basis for all Hindu philosophical systems (called *āstika*) and is held to be a foundational scripture, there is also a special type of scripture (*viśeṣaśāstra*) for Śaivism called Āgama held to have been revealed by → Śiva (→ Śaiva Āgamas). Both the Vedas and the Āgamas are considered to be authoritative by the Śaiva Siddhānta system.

The Śaiva Āgamas as they are now available to us contain a detailed and thorough ritual scheme for achieving the highest spiritual end, → liberation (*mokṣa*). But they also teach religious rites for achieving worldly enjoyments (*bhoga*), as not all persons are inclined to strive for liberation in this life. In order to perform religious rites, the Āgamas have well-formulated philosophical doctrines that serve as the base. At the same time, the elaborate religious rites serve as the concrete manifestations of those philosophical doctrines. Further, they also have a detailed scheme of → *mantra*s that are inseparable from the religious rites. Since these texts strive to chalk out a detailed plan of religious activity, they also accord a very important place for yogic disciplines. On the basis of the Yoga traditions' concept of *kuṇḍalinī* (see → Yoga), they have a detailed picture of different psycho-neuro tubes in the human body, different breath control techniques, and so on. Finally, as a self-contained religious system, the Āgamas have a separate code of conduct with elaborate rules and regulations that an initiated adept should put into practice. These four broad categories of subject matter that the Āgamas are supposed ideally to contain are called *vidyā* or *jñāna* (doctrines), *kriyā* (rituals), *yoga*, and *caryā* (right conduct). There is also another type of division of the Śaiva Āgamas into three: *tantrakalā*, *mantrakalā*, and *upadeśakalā*. The first explains in detail the performance of various rites such as the fire rituals and the worship of Śiva; the second explains the *mantra*s, various meditations, and so on; and the third speaks about the philosophical doctrines such as the highest reality, Śiva, the evolution of various *tattva*s (categories), and so on (Śivāgrayogī's commentary on *CiÑāCi.* 13)

Speciality of the Śaiva Siddhānta

Generally the doctrines and the rituals expounded in the Śaiva Āgamas are held to be superior to those expounded in the Veda and other allied texts. Taking the case of the philosophical doctrines, one finds the view that though a person is well read and practices spiritual ideas such as the → Vedānta and sufficiently advances, he or she cannot attain the highest goal so long as he or she is not initiated into the Śaiva system and regularly practices the ritual injunctions with a firm knowledge of the philosophical doctrines as delineated in the Śaiva Āgamas. Scriptures are broadly divided into two: higher (*para*) and lower (*apara*); those texts that speak of only the worldly science and the individual self (*laukika*) are considered to be lower (*apara*), while that which enlightens about the supreme self, namely, Śiva, is the highest (*para*; Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary on *MatĀg.* 1.5; *KāmĀg.* 1.15–18). Accordingly the Āgama texts belonging to the Śaiva Siddhānta system of religion and philosophy are the highest, as they expound not only the matter (*pāśa*) and self but also the supreme and highest being, namely, Śiva (*ĪśŚai.* 1.5).

Śaiva Siddhānta Doctrine: Triple Categories (*Tripadārtha*)

(1) *Pati*

As the manifested world has a form and as it exists for some time and then perishes, it is an effect produced by a preexisting cause. In this connection, the analogy of the production of the pot by a potter from the preexisting clay is very often cited. The potter is the instrumental cause, while the clay is the material cause. Accordingly in the case of the world, the supreme omniscient Śiva is the instrumental cause, while the material cause out of which he shapes the universe is called → *māyā*. In the Śaiva Siddhānta system, *māyā* has completely a different connotation from that of the Vedānta system. Though the existence of *pati* (the

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supreme Lord, Śiva) is proved on the basis of syllogism, it is resorted only to satisfy the rationalistic temperament of some people. For, knowing fully well the pitfalls of too much dependence on syllogism, the Āgamas do not generally overemphasize such an argument.

(2) *Paśu*

The individual self is technically called *paśu* and is considered to be coeval with Śiva in the sense that it is not created and that it exists along with Śiva. What is more, the self ideally possesses in its core all the attributes of Śiva. But due to its beginningless association with the impurity technically called *āṇavamala*, the self does not realize its divine qualities of omniscience and omnipotence and considers itself to be completely under the control of *mala* (impurity), by which its power of knowledge and action is covered. Along with the *āṇavamala*, two more impurities, *karmamala* (the impurity produced from good and bad deeds that creates pleasure and pain) and *māyāmala* (the impurity that creates the psycho-physical instruments for experiencing pain and pleasure), contribute to the self's bondage in its transmigratory existence through attachment and aversion as well as giving it a psychophysical body in which it is caged, as it were. Thus the self activated by attachment and aversion performs various acts and thereby experiences pain and pleasure. When, due to the → grace of Śiva, it undergoes the required initiation and performs spiritual practices, its → *karma* is destroyed, and Śiva makes it realize its innate power of knowledge and action, which is unlimited, unbounded, and equal to him in all respects. This is called liberation (*mokṣa*).

(3) *Pāśa*

This category comprises all that is material and inert that serves as the medium and instrument for the self's action and manifestation of its limited power of knowledge and action. The concrete form of it is the phenomenal world. It helps the self by providing the material instrument for its full play whereby the self exhausts its *karma* and finally gets released. The *māyā* is the matter, the basic material, which, when manipulated by Śiva, evolves into the world. The very *raison d'être* of the phenomenal world is to aid the self in exhausting its accumulated *karma*.

These preceding passages are just an introduction, shorn of technicalities, to the threefold categories (*tripadārtha, tattvatraya*) of the Śaiva Siddhānta system. In the following pages, I will analyze in detail these basic concepts.

Pati

The Āgamas argue that everything in the material world – earth, water, and so on, and the combination of these elements (see → *mahābhūtas*) – comes into existence at a particular moment and then perishes after sometime. Being inert and material, they cannot be produced by themselves; neither are the individual selves that populate the world capable of producing them, as they possess only limited knowledge and power. Therefore, a supreme all-knowing agent who is fully conscious of and thereby controls the matter, and who possesses infallible and thorough knowledge of the objects to be created, is the agent of creation, sustenance, and destruction of the phenomenal world. Thus the very existence of the material universe presupposes the absolute necessity of the existence of a supreme Lord (*pati*) who is none other than Śiva. With regard to the selves who are uncreated and who exist along with Śiva and thus are coeval with him, Śiva brings forth the fruition of their *karma* according to which their psychophysical bodies are in the world, so that they work out their destiny by experiencing pain and pleasure. As stated earlier, Śiva also grants them his grace so that their spiritual vision opens up and makes them reach the liberated state (*kaivalya*), making them perform spiritual practices whereby they realize their essential nature and freedom. This shows that without Śiva, nothing takes place. This is summed up in the following passage of Bṛhaspati, one of the earliest Śaiva teachers cited by Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha in his commentary, the *Vṛtti*, on the *Mṛgendrāgama* 3.7:

> *bhavabhoktṛ bhogasādhanatadupādānādi yo jānāti tam te bhavennahīdaṃ puṃkarmāśayavipākajñam.*
>
> All these [phenomenal existence] cannot exist without him who fully knows about the origin of the world, the selves who are the enjoyers, their experiences and the ripening of the impurities of the selves. (*MṛgĀg.* 3.7)

And in the *Tattvaprakāśa*:

> *bhuktiṃ muktimaṇūnāṃ svavyāpāre samarthatādhānam*
> *jaḍavargasya vidhatte sarvānugrāhakaḥ śambhuḥ.*

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> Śambhu, the bestower of grace on all, grants both the enjoyment as well as liberation on the selves and makes the inert objects capable of evolving. (*TatPr.* 35)

Śiva's functions and attributes are fully enumerated and analyzed in the Āgama texts and the philosophical manuals based on them.

Essential Attributes of Śiva

Śiva is the innermost self of everything and the inner controller of individual selves. In fact, he is the inner essence of the entire universe – conscious and inert. According to the **Cintyāgama* (*Pañcāvaraṇārcanavidhipaṭala*, 86): "As the honey in the flower, he exists as the inner core of all, activating and controlling everyone."

Though Śiva is the inner controller of everything, he is at the same time beyond all these manifestations of name and form. He is beyond and above the phenomenon, shining and ever pure. Therefore he is inscrutable and illimitable and cannot be viewed, hence inexplicable. He is the subtlest of the subtle, ever existent, immovable, and indestructible. Being without parts, he is beyond name and form. See the **Sarvajñānottarāgama* (1.22–3), which introduces a division in the concept of the supreme reality, *pati*. According to it, *pati* is Sadāśiva, possessing a *mantra* form and is the lord of all the *mantras*. He is the agent of creation, sustenance, and reabsorption of the universe, and he is worshipped by *mantras* composed of words and syllables. He is the support of all the innumerable worlds.

On the contrary, the text continues, Śiva is beyond Sadāśiva, and he is beyond *mantra*, absolutely free from any impurity and transcending *mantra* and form. He is omniscient, all-pervasive, existing in himself and all encompassing:

> *śivavastu paraṃ tasmānmantrātīto nirañjanaḥ*
> *nirāmayo nirādhāro varṇarūpavivarjitaḥ*
> *sarvajñaḥ sarvagaḥ śāntaḥ sarvātmā sarvatomukhaḥ*
>
> Śiva is beyond Sadāśiva, transcends the *mantra*, blemishless, without any deficiency, requiring no support, without colour or form, omniscient, all-pervasive, tranquil, self of all and all-knowing. (*SarĀg.* 24–25)

Regarding this, Sadāśivaśivācārya's commentary *Vṛtti* on the *Śivajñānabodha* (1) states, referring to the *Acintyaviśvasādākhyāgama*:

> *paramaṃ śāśvataṃ satyajñānānantasukhātmakam*
> *vācyavācakarāhityamavāṅmanasagocaram.*
>
> [Śiva], the supreme, eternal, of the form of ever-existince, consciousness and unlimited bliss, beyond word and meaning and beyond the reach of word and mind.

The same view is also put in a slightly different way in the commentary of Sadāśivācārya on the *Śivajñānabodha*: Śiva, the supreme reality, is beyond the reach of the mind and reasoning. But that Śiva – who is accompanied by his supreme power, namely, the *bindu*, and possessing omniscience and so on, and who is the creator of the universe (and hence called Śakta) – can very well be the object of our definition and understanding (see *ŚiJñ.* 1, 2, in which the ancient hymn, the *Śivamahimnastava*, is also cited).

Śiva is the supreme Lord of this entire universe, which exists, moves, and finally is destroyed under his control. In a sense, Śiva is innumerable since he exists as the inner controller of innumerable objects, animate and inanimate, in the world. As he is unique, he cannot be compared to any other person or substance in the world (for a clear presentation of this idea, see *Svāyambhuvasūtrasaṃgraha* 4.3).

→ Viṣṇu, → Brahmā, and other gods mentioned in the scriptures are all different manifestations of that supreme Śiva in his *sakala* ("with form") aspect. As such they are only subordinate agents under the complete control of Śiva. Regarding this view Sadāśivācārya's commentary on *Śivajñānabodha* 1, refers to the *Parākhyāgama* (also known as *Parākhyatantra*).

He is neither like the objects that are perceptible since that which is perceptible by the sense organs is perishable, nor is he like those which are utterly imperceptible since that which is absolutely imperceptible is nonexistent like the hare horn (see Umāpati's *Civappirakācam* 13 and Maturaiccivappirakācar's commentary thereon).

Śiva is loving towards his children, namely, the creatures that he, as a father, maintains and according to whose qualifications and aptitudes he controls everything (see Rāmakaṇṭha on *MatĀg.* 3.2). He possesses knowledge that is abundant, unlimited, and direct, as it is not limited to any sense organ or mind. He himself is consciousness (see *MṛgĀg.* 5.16; and Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti* 2.4).

Though the scriptures portray him as having five faces and 15 eyes, he is ultimately without form while, these descriptions are only aids for

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worship and → meditation for those who cannot fix their mind on a formless reality. Moreover, these faces and organs are not essential attributes that aid him in generating any type of knowledge or action. For, Śiva is capable of knowing everything directly, and by his mere wish he performs all the activities, including creation of the material world by activating the primordial matter (*māyā*), maintenance of the world until its dissolution and dissolving the entire world in *māyā* during the time of the great deluge, veiling the actual nature of the self during its lifetime, and finally bestowing grace upon the self by opening its consciousness to higher realization. Śiva performs all these actions through his inseparable and inalienable power (→ *śakti*) that is conscious and ever ready to do all that he wishes. If Śiva has any instrument at all, it is this *śakti* (see *MṛgĀg.* 3.2–3). That this *śakti* is conscious is emphasized by the Āgama texts, whereas other systems like Advaita Vedānta hold that the power of the supreme reality is inert. In fact, the entire manifested universe is nothing but his *śakti*. Thus we see that Śiva performs all actions that are impossible for the bound selves, a fact that makes him entirely different from them. (See the argument that is used to prove that Śiva is neither one among the selves nor a special category of the self; he is completely different from them and is free from any trace of the quality of bound self. In fact, Rāmakaṇṭha in his commentary on the *Nareśvaraparīkṣā* 3.23 refutes the conception of → Īśvara held by the Pātañjala Yoga system [see → Yoga] on the basis of the above-mentioned argument. See also Umāpati's *Civappirakācam* 18, and the commentary thereon by Maturaiccivappirakācar according to which Śiva performs all his five actions – creation, sustenance, dissolution, veiling, and bestowing grace upon the selves – as a play without any special effort.) These actions are like a play insofar as Śiva does not need any special effort to do them and not because these actions are performed by him without any purpose.

We also have some uncommon views with regard to *pati* that differ from the mainstream ones. Among the Āgamas, *Rauravāgama* and *Ajitāgama*, among others, stand out as holding somewhat peculiar views regarding Śiva, the highest reality. In the first chapter of the *Rauravasūtrasaṃgraha*, which is a part of the *Rauravāgama*, we find the usage of certain epithets such as Dharmādharmamaya ("Consisting of Righteousness and Unrighteousness") addressed to Śiva. We also come across such usages as Parāprakṛti ("Supreme Material Principle"), Pradhānapuruṣeśa ("Lord of the Self and the Material Principle"), and Mahāmāyātimāyin ("The Supreme Possessor of the *bindu* and who transcends it"), which are peculiar to the Śaiva Siddhānta system and remind one of early puranic terminology. Māyin ("The Possessor of *Māyā*") is an important epithet that one comes across in the upanishadic literature but is not found in the agamic philosophy, where *māyā* is the real material cause of the universe.

The *Ajitāgama* has its own share of peculiar views with regard to Śiva: All entities (*tattvas*) beginning with Śiva and ending with earth (*pṛthivī*), the created universe comprising all creatures, is Śiva. What is more, there is none else other than him – you and I are in fact he! (*AjiĀg.* 2.17) Śiva is also called Saccidānandarūpin ("Having the Form of Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss"), as in the → Upaniṣads. He is also called → *brahman* (*AjiĀg.* 2). Moreover, *māyā* is called *mūlaprakṛti*, the material cause of the universe, and is said to exist in Śiva, while *vidyā*, the supreme knowledge or power, is identified with *māyā*, and Śiva is held to be its support, an idea that is alien to the general Śaiva Siddhānta doctrines.

Śiva's nature is also said to be of triads – such as *nitya* (eternal), *anitya* (non-eternal), and *nityānitya* (both eternal and non-eternal) – two opposites and the third that shares the properties of both. In the same way, the opposites – *jñāna* (knowledge) and *ajñāna* (ignorance), *sat* (being) and *asat* (non-being), *unnata* (elevated) and *nata* (non-elevated), *susthita* (prosperous) and *duḥsthita* (nonprosperous) – are also the attributes of Śiva. Finally, the *Ajitāgama* as a synthesis says,

> In the various systems such as the Bhairava, the Pāśupata, the 18 Purāṇas, the six limbs of the Veda, the Yoga, and the Nyāya, whatever reality has been posited after due discussions, all those are nothing but Śiva, the eternal reality. (*AjiĀg.* 23–25)

The **Sarvajñānottarāgama* posits four categories instead of the usual three; it differentiates between *pati* and Śiva (*SarĀg.*, *Jñānakāṇḍa* 1.22). While Sadāśiva is the *pati*, Śiva exists beyond him (*SarĀg.*, *Jñānakāṇḍa* 1.25). Śiva is idealistically conceived to be existing completely beyond the reach of word and thought.

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Śiva's Fivefold Function

As the supreme agent, Śiva always performs the five functions (*pañcakṛtya*): creating the universe, maintenance, reabsorption at the final deluge, veiling the self's real nature, and bestowing the final grace on the self leading to *mukti* (*TatPr.* 7; *MṛgĀg.* 2.1; and Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti*). In fact, Śiva removes (*apohati*) the group of bondages (*pāśajāla*) by which the individual self is bound and whereby it has been made completely dissimilar to Śiva. Apart from him, neither the individual selves (being veiled by the *āṇavamāla*) nor the material principle *māyā* (being inert) can perform these actions. See for this Śrīkumāra's commentary, called the *Tātparyadīpikā*, and Aghoraśiva's *Vṛtti* on the *Tattvaprakāśa* (7). Aghoraśiva further explains the agency of Śiva thus: his agency is twofold – in the pure one, he directly creates the pure *tattvas*, pure worlds, and so on from *bindu* for the sake of enjoyments of *vidyā* (the *mantras*) and *vidyeśvaras* (name of a class of liberated beings) in those worlds; and he also creates knowledge through *nāda* (divine sound), while in the impure one, Śiva creates through Ananta the impure worlds and *tattvas* with *māyā* as the material principle for the bound selves.

The category of *pati* consists of:

(1) Śiva, who is free from *mala* since of beginningless time and is pure by his very nature;

(2) those liberated selves who are eternal and whose *mala* has been removed by Śiva; and

(3) the *mantra* and the *mantreśvaras* (Lords of mantras) for whom only the *adhikāramala* (last trace of impurity) remain (*MṛgĀg.* 2.1; and Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti*).

Other *Tattvas* Included in the *Pati*

There are five more *tattvas* that come under the category of *pati*: *śivatattva*, *śakti*, *sadāśiva*, *īśvara*, and *śuddhavidyā*. They are "pure" because they partake of the qualities of Śiva and are also called *śivatattvas*. The list of *śuddhatattvas* is provided by the *Tattvaprakāśa* (21). → Abhinavagupta, one of the greatest exponents of the Trika-Pratyabhijñā system (→ Kashmir Śaivism), also gives the same list in his *Paramārthasāra* (14).

The first *śuddhatattva* is variously named as *bindu*, *kuṇḍalinī*, and so on. The *Ratnatraya* of Śrīkaṇṭha defines *bindu* as

> the source from which the pure worlds come out, exist and into which get dissolved and which is also the source of supreme *nāda* (*parānāda*). (*RaTr.* 22)

Śivāgrayogī, of the 16th century, explains further in his *Bṛhadbhāṣya* on the *Śivajñānabodha* (2) that *kuṇḍalinī* is that, qualified by which, Śiva becomes the material cause of the pure *tattvas*, the sound, and so on. The *śivatattva*, being the supreme most *tattva*, pervades all the six paths of liberation (*ṣaḍadhvā*) into which the entire world, consisting of name and form, sound and its object, are included (see *ĪśŚai.* 17.223).

There is also another view that holds that there are only four pure *tattvas*. The *Ullekhanī* (17), a valuable commentary on the *Śataratnasaṃgraha* cites the difference of opinion in this regard. According to the passages cited there, whose source is not known, *śivatattva*, *śaktitattva*, *bindu*, and *nāda* are the four pure *tattvas*. *Mahāmāya*, which is also called *kuṇḍalinī*, is called *nāda* according to some of these *ācāryas*. According to the *Pauṣkarāgama*, *śaktitattva* is included in the *nāda*, and therefore there are only four *śuddhatattvas* (see *Ullekh.* 25). The *Ullekhanī* also cites the view of the **Saryajñānottarāgama*, according to which *bindutattva* is also known as *śakti* functioning as the source of all creation.

Generally the *śivatattva* is distinguished from Śiva, the highest reality and the supreme source, by some of the traditional teachers such as Aghoraśiva. According to him, the *śivatattva* is basically the *bindu*, and it serves as the material cause of the pure worlds, of the pure bodies of those who attain to those worlds. It also makes manifest the power of knowledge and action of those selves in those pure worlds, while *māyā*, through the agency of *kalā* (time), makes manifest the power of knowledge of the selves in their worldly existence (see Aghoraśiva's *Vṛtti* on *TatPr.* 25). But *bindu* (i.e. *śivatattva*) and *māyā* are distinguished in that the former makes manifest the power of omniscience of the selves while *māyā* engenders only false and limited knowledge such as considering the material body as one's own self (see Aghoraśiva's *Vṛtti* on *TatPr.* 25). Aghoraśiva cautions that this verse of *Tattvaprakāśa*

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should not be explained as treating the nature of either Śiva or his *śakti*; since *bindu* functions as the material cause, it cannot but itself be material and therefore different from Śiva, who is absolute consciousness and is beyond the list of *tattvas* (see Aghoraśiva's *Vṛtti* on *TatPr.* 25). Aghoraśiva emphasizes the basic concept of Śaiva Siddhānta according to which the fundamental material cause that transforms itself to produce the effects cannot but be material and Śiva can never be so because of the said reason. He also refutes the view of illusory transformation (*vivarta*) of Śiva or his *śakti* since, according to Śaiva Siddhānta, the created world is real and not illusory (see also Aghoraśiva's *Vṛtti* on *TatPr.* 25, where he cites a few passages from the *Pauṣkarāgama*, which strongly argues against the view of transformation of Śiva or of his *śakti* into the phenomenal world). Thus he explains that the *śivatattva* is nothing but *bindu*, which is also called *kuṇḍaliṇī*, and that it is inert. It only serves as a form of "*śakti*" that Śiva assumes (*parigrahaśakti*) solely for the purpose of pure creation. *Bindu* is the pure matter that provides the bodies for Ananta, who is the creator (under Śiva's delegation) of the impure worlds beginning from *māyā* and for the *mantra* (which are said to be seven crore and reside in the pure world). *Bindu* in the form of *kuṇḍaliṇī* also serves as the material cause for the pure worlds where Ananta and others have their experiences. See Śivāgrayogī's *Saṃgrahabhāṣya* on *Śivajñānabodha* 2 as well as *Īśānaśaivagurudevapaddhati* 17.219–220.

At the same time, another commentator, Śrīkumāra, on the *Tattvaprakāśa*, probably earlier than Aghoraśiva, explains in his *Tātparyadīpikā* that the *śivattava* is Śiva and therefore as the supreme source of the material universe and therefore possessing unlimited power (*TātDī.* 25; where he also cites a text called *Siddhāntahṛdaya*, probably lost now, which describes Śiva as existing beyond the six *adhvās* [paths] and as transcendental; the tenor of the text resembles the views of Śiva Advaita system. Further, *śivatattva* is the repository of all the *śaktis* such as the *icchā* (will), *jñāna* (knowledge), and *kriyā* (action) which function under his command and with his support (*TātDī.* 26). The *śivatattva* as *bindu* under the supreme command of Śiva gives rise to the six paths (*ṣaḍadhvā*): *kalā*, *varṇa* (phonem), *pada* (word), *mantra*, *tattva*, and *bhuvana* (world) (*RaTr.* 123). Some hold that *bindu* is another form of Śiva's *śakti*, in its aspect of *kriyā*, also called *kuṇḍaliṇī* and the other one being *jñānaśakti* the aspect of consciousness and that they both inhere in Śiva (*RaTr.* 126). Śrīkaṇṭha refutes this view and states clearly, as Aghoraśiva does later, that *bindu*, being liable to transformation, cannot but be inert and therefore cannot inhere in Śiva, who is pure unlimited consciousness (*RaTr.* 137).

The *śaktitattva* is defined as the first opening or transformation of the *śiva*(*tattva*), that is *bindu*, into the act of grace on the selves as well as on the inert matter in order that the former experience their *karma* and the latter evolve into the material world (*TatPr.* 27). This *śaktitattva* is not different from *śivatattva*. It transforms itself into various *bhuvanas* such as *śāntī* and also into *nāda* (sound). Aghoraśiva in his commentary (*TātDī.* 27) says that it does not possess any parts and he explains *śakti* also to be different from *śaktitattva* on the basis of the same reasoning that he adduces to prove that Śiva does not transform himself into various material worlds.

Sadāśiva is that state of Śiva in which the powers of knowledge and action (*jñānaśakti* and *kriyāśakti*) are equal (*TatPr.* 28). As before, Aghoraśiva explains that *sadāśivatattva* is a second state of *bindu*, which becomes ready to create the universe. It is also called *sādākhya* (*TātDī.* 28).

When the power of knowledge (*jñānaśakti*) is less than that of action, that state is called Īśvara. It is the agent of all actions – creation and so on (*sarvārthakartrī*). In this state the creation of the pure as well as the impure worlds starts presided over by Ananta and other *vidyeśvaras* (*TatPr.* 29).

When the power of knowledge is higher that of action, that state is called *vidyā* or *śuddhavidyā*. As such, it is the source of omniscience to the seven crore *mahāmantras* (*saptakoṭimantra*) and so on who reside in those pure worlds (*TatPr.* 30; *TātDī.* 30). The *śuddhavidyā* transforms into *nāda*, which in turn produces *varṇa*, *mantra*, and so on.

Of them, the *śivatattva* is of the form of *bindu*, which is the source of other four as well as of *nāda*, from which come the phonemes (*mātṛkā*, which is the source of letters), the *mantras*, and the scriptures. The *vidyātattva* and others transform into bodies of those selves in higher and pure worlds.

As against the viewpoint of the Mīmāṃsākas (→ Mīmāṃsā), according to which Śiva is conceived,

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in such vedic texts as the *Śatarudrīya*, to be merely of verbal form, the *Mṛgendrāgama* stresses that mere words like pot or moon cannot perform the functions of those objects denoted by them, and, therefore, there exists an entity other than the word denoted by it. This argument is adduced *à priori* to prove that Śiva also has his own body. It is also argued that Śiva's creatorship of the world is closely related to his having a body, since anybody without a "body" cannot be an agent of action. (Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti* on *MṛgĀg.* 3.7). Further, it is evident that only a being that possesses a body is capable of doing any action (Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti* on *MṛgĀg.* 3.7). Finally, the *Mṛgendrāgama* says that Śiva is not essentially considered to have a body, but his supreme power, *śakti*, performs all actions that a body is supposed to do, and it is called his "body." (Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti* on *MṛgĀg.* 3.7). In the following verse (3.8), Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha initially accepts this view that Śiva does have a body and that his body is not like that of an ordinary mortal. Śiva's body is not made of matter or is caused by the eternal impurity, *mala*. It is made of *mantra* and is called "*śāktam vapuḥ*" (the body of power). The *śaktis* – *īśāna*, *tatpuruṣa*, *aghora*, *vāmadeva*, and *sadyojāta* – are thought to function as his body (see also Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti* on *MṛgĀg.* 3.14).

In the *Pauṣkarāgama*, which is one of the very important Āgamas that has contributed significantly to the development of Śaiva Siddhānta doctrines, we find that the same view is well argued and developed. In the *Pauṣkarāgama* (*Vidyāpāda* 1.32) it has been established that to be the creator of the universe, Śiva need not have a body at all and that he can do all the actions without the instrument of any body. It is also taken as a mark of supreme agency for Śiva. The opponent argues that if Śiva is the supreme agent for creation, then he should have a body, which in turn makes him subject to all modifications like ordinary mortals, which is against the fundamental view that Śiva is unchanging and eternal. In the Maturaiccivappirakācar's elaborate commentary on Umāpati's *Civappirakācam*, there are arguments conclusively showing that Śiva does not have a body and that possessing a body is not a precondition for his agency or for any action. In fact, the *Pauṣkarāgama* says, "Being an agent does not go against [the view of] immutability." On the contrary, it is asked, "As Śiva is free from all adjuncts (*upādhi*) he is very much the creator," and the commentator Umāpati argues that Śiva is the only creator. Umāpati states that possession of knowledge about the material cause is the only prerequisite for the agency and not possessing a body. Therefore, as Śiva has supreme knowledge and since he is free from *kalā* and other limiting adjuncts, he is fit to be the creator of this universe. The *Pauṣkarāgama* (1.34–35) also cites the examples of the self inhabiting the body, and the sun and argues that the individual self that inhabits the body does not have any "body" for itself but controls the body in all its functions. The sun, by its mere presence makes the beings act and makes the lotus bloom. In the same way, Śiva by his mere presence performs all actions.

The final position of the *Pauṣkarāgama* and thereby of the Śaiva Siddhānta is stated in the following verses:

> *sadehasyāpi kartṛtvaṃ sarvatrāpi yadīṣyate*
> *taddehasyāpi kāryatvād vyāptaṃ kartrāntareṇa tat*
> *tasya dehādayo'pyevam ityavasthā na kutracit.*
>
> If agency (*kartṛtva*) is always insisted only for an embodied being then, since that body being an effect, it will require another agent (*kartṛ*) for its creation. This naturally leads to an endless regression (*anavasthā*). (*PauṣĀg.* 1.35–36)

Umāpati comments that Śiva, possessing infinite and inscrutable power (*vicitraśakti*), creates the universe without the requirement of any "body."

Though Śiva does not possess a body, it is not at all surprising that he controls his supreme power and performs all the five cosmic functions (*pañcakṛtya*).

Śakti as the Mother

The *śakti* that is inseparable from Śiva is also thought to be the supreme mother (Śakti [→ Mahadevī]), giving birth to innumerable selves. For this see Nigamajñāna II's commentary, the *Śivajñānabodhopanyāsa*, on *Śivajñānabodha* 10, where he cites the verse of *Matangapārameśvara* 3.2–3 as support: For, during the great deluge (*mahāpralaya*), when the consciousness of the selves was fully covered, and it appears as though they do not exist, it is the *śakti* that brings forth the *kalā* from pure and impure *māyā* and with that slightly removes the covering of the *āṇavamala*. Thus the

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innate knowledge of the selves shines forth, and in this way Śakti is called the universal mother and Śiva the universal father. See the commentary of Śivāgrayogī on the second invocatory verse of *Civañāṇacittiyār* of Aruḷnanticivācārya; he states that Śakti as the benevolent mother makes the selves realize their inseparable relation with Śiva just as she exists inseperable from him.

The Individual Self (*Paśu*)

The individual self is technically called *paśu*. It is the conscious agent bound by the impurities (*mala*). Its essential attribute is the power of consciousness and action (*caitanya*), which is eternal and indestructible (*MṛgĀg* 2.5; also *ParĀg* 1.15). The quality of being a bound self (*paśutva*) is constituted of the complete veiling of this innate power by another eternal impurity, called *āṇavamala* (*VarPad.* 4). The important attributes of *paśu* according to the *Nareśvaraparīkṣā*, of Sadyojyoti (1.2) are as follow:

- different from all physical (and psychical) bodies
- indestructible
- all pervasive
- different from other selves
- possessing the *mala*
- non-inert
- enjoyer of the fruits of its own actions
- agent of action
- possessor of limited knowledge
- under the control of an over Lord.

That the individual self, in its unevolved state, is without activity, without qualifications, and (at the worldly level) under the control of the material principle called *māyā* is brought out by this *Kiraṇāgama* passage very clearly:

> *paśurnityo hyamūrtoʼjño niṣkriyo nirguṇoʼprabhuḥ*
> *vyāpī māyodarāntastho bhogopāyavicintakaḥ.*
>
> The self is eternal, without form, ignorant, without action, without qualities, dependent, all-pervasive, under the control of *māyā* and always thinking about the means of enjoyment. (*KirĀg.* 1.15)

The *Nareśvaraparīkṣā* and Rāmakaṇṭha' commentary *Prakāśa* cite the essential attributes of the self as the knower and the agent of action, who engages himself (in action) after knowing the objects through his knowledge and who accordingly enjoys the fruits of his actions (*NarParī.* 1.2; *NarParīPr.* 1.2). As against the → Sāṃkhya view according to which the individual self is not the agent of action (*akartā*), the Śaiva Siddhānta holds that the self is endowed with the power of action. Again, as against the *śūnyavāda* school of Buddhism, according to which the objects are mere constructs of knowledge and hence not separate from the self, the Śaiva Siddhānta holds the objects to be real and existing separate from the self as stated in the *Matangapārameśvarāgama* (4.43).

The state of transmigration in which the bound self finds itself is succinctly stated to be that where the entire world, consisting of mobile and immobile beings, continuously moves due to ignorance and thereby gets into various troubles. The same self at its highest state (*śuddhāvasthā*) is in full possession of its innate power of supreme consciousness and action, which has been restored to it and which it manifests in all its glory.

Liberation: *Mukti*

In Śaiva Siddhānta, which is a dualistic system, *pati* and *paśu* are never obliterated, and their individuality is maintained even in the liberated state. Simply put, the Śaiva Siddhānta believes liberation to be existing equal to Śiva in all respects, which it calls *śivasamatā*. The ancient author Bṛhaspati unequivocally states that the same unsurpassed and imperishable glory present in the supreme Lord is also present in the liberated self (quoted in Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti* on the *MṛgĀg.* 2.29). As the *Nareśvaraparīkṣā* states, it is the highest conception of *mukti* taught in the Śaiva Āgamas and surpasses all other conceptions held by other systems (*NarParī.* 3.80). What is the special characteristic of the liberated state expounded in the Śaiva Āgamas? Sadyojyoti answers by saying that it consists of fully possessing the power of omniscience and omnipotence, which is nowhere found in other systems (Rāmakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti* on *MṛgĀg.* 2.29). Rāmakaṇṭha gives a hierarchy of the concept of *mukti* held in different philosophical systems beginning from Buddhism, → Vaiśeṣika, Jaina, Sāṃkhya, → Pāñcarātra, and Vedānta. Finally, he establishes that it is Śaiva Siddhānta that surpasses the Vedānta and is the highest. For, the

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highest state to be reached by the liberation seeker in the Śaiva Siddhānta is completely different from that taught by other scriptures. Rāmakaṇṭha also categorically states that there cannot be any other highest good than having the supreme power of omniscience and omnipotence as taught in the Śaiva Āgamas (Rāmakaṇṭha on *MatĀg.*3.1). Even to be under the control of the supreme god in the liberated state is considered to be less than the highest state, as the self is not completely independent and free (*MṛgĀg.* 2.29; Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha's *Vṛtti* adds that Śiva ceases to be the controller of the liberated self for all times to come).

As regards the means to attain *mukti*, all these *ācāryas* unanimously hold that initiation (*dīkṣā*) is the highest and the only means. It is argued that just by mere knowledge the impurities covering the self (*mala*) cannot be removed, as it is a substance (*dravya*) just as the cataract that covers the eye cannot be removed except by the surgical expertise of the doctor. As *dīkṣā* is nothing but an activity of Śiva, only it is efficacious in removing the cover of *mala* (Rāmakaṇṭha on the *MatĀg.* 4.58–59). According to the *Parākhyāgama* and also the *Śivāgamādimāhātmyasaṃgraha* of Jñānaprakāśa, *dīkṣā* is the only means to attain liberation, as neither knowledge (*jñāna*) nor *yoga* nor ritual conduct (*caryā*) can bring about liberation. The *Skandapurāṇa* categorically states that without *dīkṣā* involving the purification of the six *adhvans* (the six ways in which the self has its experiences and endeavors to attain liberation; *adhvaśuddhi*), liberation is impossible to attain. It says that seeking liberation without *dīkṣā* is comparable to the effort of a blind person to walk without a stick (*daṇḍa*) or the effort of crossing the ocean without the aid of a boat. Of course there are certain agamic passages that seem to give equal importance to both knowledge (*jñāna*) and initiation (*dīkṣā*). It is explained in the *Śataratnasaṃgraha* that though both are equally important, for the *ācārya* who performs initiation and teaches the disciples, knowledge is important, while for the liberation seeker it is initiation (*ŚatSaṃg.* 1; *Ullekh.* 1). What is more, even *dīkṣā* is also a form of *jñāna*, and just as the sun's rays are capable of both illumining and burning, *dīkṣā* also endows the initiated with knowledge and liberation (*ŚatSaṃg.* 1). The *Pauṣkarāgama* and the **Sarvajñānottarāgama* state that the *ācārya*, by the special Śaiva sacrificial rites (*śivādhvara*) that form part of *dīkṣā*, actually restrains the powers of the *pāśa*, which bind the self just as the *mantra* and the herbs fully prevent the effects of poison.

Having seen briefly the basic concepts of the early phase of the Śaiva Siddhānta, we will briefly review its second phase, for which the place of origin and widespread propagation shifts from the north of India to the south, especially the Tamil country. As is well known, the Tamil country has a long tradition of Śaiva devotion propagated and enriched by the Śaiva devotees par excellence (→ Nāyaṇārs) who sang in praise of Śiva in the Tamil language by making pilgrimages to the hundreds of Śiva temples scattered throughout the land. These hymns were compiled later and are called *Tēvāram*, and the Chola kings have made rich endowments for the daily singing of these hymns in many of the Śiva temples.

Historical Background

A brief reference to the historical situation that prevailed during the period when the *Śivajñānabodha* became the basis of a distinct school of Śaiva Siddhānta in the Tamil country may be useful here. In South India agamic Śaivism was widespread from at least the 11th–12th centuries. The great stalwart Aghoraśiva, who contributed immensely to the propagation and consolidation of Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy and ritual system through his many commentaries and independent texts, was a resident of Chola country in the mid-12th century. Trilocanaśiva, another great luminary, had also contributed to the development of Śaiva Siddhānta by writing independent texts such as the *Siddhāntasārāvali*, *Siddhāntasamuccāya*, and so on. There are also other texts in Tamil such as *Ñāṇāmirtam* composed by Vākīcamuṇivar, which is the earliest Tamil text that gives the basic teachings of the Śaiva Āgamas in a systematic way.

Next we have in the early 13th-century *Civañāṇapōtam* composed by Meykaṇṭār. It is one of the shortest ever philosophical texts that gives the essence of the Śaiva religiophilosophical system. This text had, in fact, inaugurated a new movement within the tradition of Śaiva Siddhānta in South India. For nearly eight centuries, the entire development of Śaiva Siddhānta was based on this text through commentaries and subcommentaries whereby the *Civañāṇapōtam* has become the

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fundamental text, and the Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy of later centuries was built on this text. The Śaiva Āgamas were interpreted in the light of and through the system of the *Civañāṇapōtam*, or, in other words, the Āgamas were fully utilized for the interpretation of *Civañāṇapōtam*. This trend naturally brought with it some new interpretations of some of the important concepts that were at times quite different from the earlier ones established and propagated by Sadyojyoti, Bhojadeva, Nārāyaṇakaṇṭha, Rāmakaṇṭha, Aghoraśiva, and others.

Texts

There are two versions of the *Śivajñānabodha*: one in Sanskrit said to be part of the *Rauravāgama* and the other in Tamil called *Civañāṇapōtam*, composed by Meykaṇṭār in the 13th century.

The available commentaries on the Sanskrit version of the *Śivajñānabodha* are the following:

- *Vṛtti*, the earliest available commentary, composed by Sadāśivaśivācārya of around the 14th century;
- *Śivajñānabodhopanyāsa* by Nigamajñānadeśika of the 16th century;
- three commentaries – *Laghuṭīkā* (a very short one), *Saṃgrahabhāṣya*, and *Bṛhadbhāṣya* (or *Vistṛtabhāṣya*; a very elaborate one) – all by Śivāgrayogī of the 16th century, who came from the lineage of Sadāśivaśivācārya, mentioned above;
- *Vṛtti* by Jñānaprakāśa of Śālivāṭī (i.e. Jaffna), of the 16th–17th centuries; and
- *Jñānāvaraṇabhāṣya* by Veḷḷiyampalavāṇattampirāṉ of the 17th century.

The *Civañāṇapōtam* of Meykaṇṭār has been commented on by the following:

- Aruḷnanti Śivācārya, who was his disciple and successor; it is called *Civañāṇacittiyār*, which is a free commentary and an elaborate one;
- Umāpati of the 14th century, who was a great disciple of Aruḷnanti Śivācārya, composed *Civappirakācam*;
- Pāṇṭipperumāḷ of circa the 16th century; and
- Civañāṇacuvāmikaḷ of the 18th century; this is called *Māpāṭiyam* (*Mahābhāṣya*), as it is very elaborate and detailed.

There are six important commentaries on the *Civañāṇacittiyār*. One of the important differences between the two schools of Śaiva Siddhānta is that the one, based on the *Civañāṇapōtam*, has been developed on three major textual streams:

- some of the early Upaniṣads such as the *Atharvaśikhopaniṣad* and *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*, which speak of Śiva as the highest reality;
- the *Tēvāram* devotional hymns (see → Tamil texts) of the Śaiva devotees par excellence called Nāyaṇārs, who sang the glory of Śiva in Tamil Nadu and instilled simple and unflinching devotion to Śiva in the minds of common people by visiting many Śaiva holy places; and
- the Śaiva Āgamas.

The earlier phase of Śaiva Siddhānta that has been briefly discussed above only had the Āgamas as its fundamental text, and the importance given to the Vedas was minimal. Thus the *Civañāṇapōtam* school has its own views and original interpretations of some fundamental concepts.

Aside from the texts belonging to the *Civañāṇapōtam* school, there are many others that do not strictly belong to this tradition. Texts such as the *Ñāṇāmirtam*, which preceded *Civañāṇapōtam* and was composed in the mid-12th century, communicate the essence of Śaiva Āgamas. There are also others such as the *Tattuvaviḷakkam*, *Vaḷḷal Cāttiram*, and *Meymmoḻicaritai*, composed in 14th–15th centuries, which treat the general philosophy of the Āgamas. In addition, we have the Tamil adaptations of the **Sarvajñānottarāgama* and **Devīkālottarāgama*, composed in the 14th century, which have exerted great influence on the later development of Śaiva Siddhānta since the 15th century.

To briefly outline the points discussed in the text of *Śivajñānabodha*:

Śiva is the supreme creator, protector, and destroyer of the universe, which is an effect. He absorbs the already existing universe and then creates it, and hence this universe has Śiva, who is the agent of absorption (*saṃhāra*), as its source. In fact, he activates the material principle, *māyā*, in which all the worlds are absorbed and remain during the final deluge so as to re-create the universe. *Māyā*, being inert, cannot itself evolve into the universe.

Śiva performs all his actions – creation and so on – in close association with his supreme power,

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śakti, which is not different from him and does not exist separate from him.

A conscious agent, the individual self, exists separately from the body-mind complex and has the continuous experience in all the states – waking, dream, deep sleep, and beyond.

The self in close association with the internal organ, the mind, experiences five states of consciousness; its innate power of knowledge and action is very much restricted by the *mala* – the impurity – that exists in association with the self since beginningless time. Śiva is the supreme agent, the driving force behind all the actions of the self. On that account, he neither undergoes any change nor experiences pleasure or pain. For, he performs all his actions just as the magnet activates the iron kept in its proximity without being affected in any way (see for further discussions on this important point, Śivāgrayogī's commentary on *CiÑāCi*. 1.27, 33).

Śiva is neither perceptible objectively by the self (through the sense organs or the mind) nor completely imperceptible. He is to be realized as different from both in one's own inner self.

The material world, which is inert, does not shine (i.e. is not perceived as an object) in the presence of Śiva, who is supreme consciousness, nor does Śiva "know" it objectively, as he is all knowing and omnipresent (and as such beyond subject-object relation). Therefore only the individual self knows both Śiva and the world of matter.

The self overpowered by the sense organs completely forgets its real nature. The preceptor (*guru*) through appropriate spiritual instructions frees it from the clutches of sense organs and thereby makes it realize its actual nature, which is non-difference from Śiva.

Realizing Śiva at the highest level of its innermost consciousness and abandoning its association with the fleeting world of matter, the self meditates on the holy *pañcākṣaramantra* (Śiva's name in the dative case preceded by *namaḥ*).

Such a realized self, fully conscious of its union with Śiva and existing completely under Śiva's control, becomes free from *mala*, *māyā*, and other impurities.

Just as the self makes the eyes see, so also Śiva makes the self see; in other words, the self perceives (and acts) by the help of Śiva. Therefore the self should be devoted to Śiva, who is its supreme benefactor.

In order to attain liberation, the self may approach holy men, wear their attire, and serve in the temples of Śiva.

Let us now take up for a brief examination some of the important philosophical ideas expounded in the text of the *Śivajñānabodha*. The text mainly discusses the supreme god (*pati*), the individual self (*paśu*), and the different means for the self to attain Śiva.

Inferential Argument as the Means for Establishing the Existence of Śiva

In the *Śivajñānabodha* the existence of a supreme and a unique cause that creates, sustains, and dissolves the material world is established on the basis of the inferential argument. In fact, some of the Śaiva Āgamas do have certain passages devoted to establishing the existence of Śiva on the basis of inferential arguments. Āgamas such as the *Pauṣkarāgama* (1.91–92), the *Parākhyāgama* (2.2–5), the *Svāyambhuvāgama*, and the *Mṛgendrāgama* clearly employ this argumentative style). The *Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama* (3.9) systematically discusses different types of inference, classifying it into four categories: (1) proving the existence of the possessor of qualities through its qualities; (2) proving the existence of the cause through its effect; (3) proving the effect through its cause; and (4) proving the effect through the scripture. According to the *Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama*, the inferential argument employed by the *Śivajñānabodha* (1) is the second type – proving the existence of Śiva, the cause, from that of the effect, namely, the created world.

In the → Nyāya system, this type of independent inferential argument is adopted to establish the existence of a supreme god (for two important types of theistic argument: [1] cosmoteleological and [2] argument from the existence of language and thought to a being who authored the words, see Potter, vol. II, 1970, 101), whereas in the Vedānta system, it is dozne on the basis of the revealed texts, namely, the Upaniṣads. The inferential argument independent of the Vedas is condemned in the Vedānta system; commentators such as → Śaṅkara and Śrīkaṇṭha in his commentary

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on the *Brahmasūtra*, the *Śrīkaṇṭhabhāṣya* (1.1.3), argue that by adopting an inferential argument, one can even arrive at multiple agents for the variegated universe). The syllogism goes thus.

First, as the world, consisting of living creatures that are divided into female and male as well as inert objects, is observed to be an effect, it should have an agent (*kartā*) who has created it; that agent is none other than Śiva. For, as the reasoning goes, that which is an effect and is made of parts should have a cause.

Second, Śiva does not bring about the world from nothing. He creates that which he had already dissolved unto himself. Therefore, he, who is the destroyer – in other words, the dissolver of the previously existing universe – is its creator. It is also established that other than Śiva no god is capable of performing the actions of creation, sustenance, and dissolution (see e.g. *ŚvetU.* 3.2; *ŚiJñV.* 1). In the *Śrīkaṇṭhabhāṣya* on the *Brahmasūtra* (1.1.2) and in *Śivajñānabodha* (1) the idea of dividing living creatures into female and male entities is prominent. Another noteworthy point is that the argument here starts from the dissolver of the world and establishes him as its only creator; in other words, he who is the end of the world is its origin (*SaṃgBh.* 1). Though the Āgamas argue for the existence of a supreme cause, none of them follows this mode of argument. This type of argument is equally absent in the earlier Śaiva Siddhānta texts such as *Tattvasaṃgraha*, *Tattvatrayanirṇaya*, and so on. This is one of the special features of the *Śivajñānabodha* and the texts belonging to that tradition.

While the Āgamas describe the category of *paśu* and emphasize its status and position in the world, the very existence of such a self is proved logically in *Śivajñānabodha* (both the Sanskrit text and the Tamil version) by highlighting various reasons, mostly on the lines followed to prove the existence of Śiva as the supreme Lord (*ŚiJñ.* 3). One argument employed in the *Śivajñānabodha* is as follows. The material world, being a product of *māyā*, is inert and therefore cannot in any way know or realize Śiva, the highest reality; nor does Śiva, who is pure consciousness and all pervasive, know the material world in a subject–object relation. Therefore, as a logical consequence (which the commentators on the *Śivajñānabodha* call *pāriśeṣa*), a conscious self has to be posited who is the knower of both the material world and of Śiva and who is different from both of them (*ŚiJñ.* 7).

The *Śivajñānabodha* (7) achieves two objectives: (1) proving the existence of a conscious self different from the ultimate reality, Śiva, and from the inert material world; and (2) bringing out the individual self's unique quality of being "*sadasat*," which is neither *sat* (being) nor *asat* (non-being). Here the word "*sat*," which is more common in upanishadic philosophy and in the later Vedānta schools (where Brahman is described as *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*), is used to denote the ultimate reality. This usage is rarely encountered in the Śaiva Āgamas. In the same way, the use of the term *asat* to denote the material world is also rare in parlance of Śaiva Āgamas. In the *Unmaivilakkam* (3) of Maṇavācakamkaṭantār, belonging to the *Śivajñānabodha* tradition, "*asat*" does not mean nonexistence (here the Tamil word *poi* meaning false is used to denote the bondages, including the material world). It is employed to emphasize the view that the objective world, being a product of *māyā*, does not shine at all in the presence of Śiva, who is self-luminous. Śivāgrayogin in his *Saṃgrahabhāṣya* on the *Śivajñānabodha* explains "*asat*" as *asatkalpa*, meaning almost nonexistent. The use of "*sat*" to denote the ultimate reality and "*asat*" to denote the phenomenal world, which is not found in the Śaiva Āgamas or in the early Śaiva Siddhānta texts mentioned above, is one of the special features of the *Śivajñānabodha* branch of the Śaiva Siddhānta.

This notion of *sadasat* clearly brings out the paradoxical nature of the self in bondage. The possible objection that one and the same substance cannot be *sat* and *asat* at any given moment can be overcome by saying that the self is not *sadasat* at a given moment; this term only expresses the potential of the self – as long as it is in contact with *asat*, namely, the phenomenal existence, it is *asat* (not in its real nature), and when (after undergoing the necessary spiritual training) it comes into closest contact with Śiva (the *sat*), the self manifests *sat* (its real nature). Further, once the self has realized its true nature as nondifferent from Śiva, there is no more chance of its becoming *asat* even when it is in contact with the objective world (the *asat*).

Śaiva Siddhānta and Advaita

Śaiva Siddhānta is very often claimed by its adherents to be nondualistic in its philosophical outlook and is held to be even better than (superior

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to?) the vedantic Advaita system, which is discounted by many Śaiva philosophers as *māyāvāda*. But looking into the fundamental text, namely, the *Civañāṇapōtam* or the *Civañāṇacittiyār*, we may not find any direct reference to the concept of Advaita or any allusion to it. The *Civañāṇapōtam* (8) makes an approximate reference to this view.

Naturally, many later writers, especially from the beginning of the 16th century, gave much attention to the expression *aṉṉiyamiṉmai* (without being nondifferent) occurring in the *Civañāṇapōtam* (8) and offered explanations in different ways (see e.g. *CiÑāCi.* 2.91). It is argued that it is a reference to the nondualistic relation that exists between Śiva and the individual self in the state of liberation.

According to them, the self, after attaining liberation, experiences its inseparable relation and not oneness with Śiva. For, it also possesses the same qualities that Śiva does, and when the veil of *āṇavamala* is removed, its innate divine qualities shine forth, and abiding in the holy feet of Śiva (which is the special feature of *mukti* and is very often stressed by *Civañāṇapōtam* and *Civañāṇacittiyār*), it experiences the nondual relation with Śiva (*CiÑāCi.* 2.3; and Śivāgrayogī's commentary).

Now, this nondual relationship is not something to be attained by the self, for it exists always, and though not realized in the worldly existence by the self, Śiva, in fact, performs all of his as well as the self's actions existing inseparably from the self. This idea is developed by later writers, and Śiva is therefore held to be in relationship with the self, which is threefold:

(1) as an all-pervasive entity, Śiva exists as one with the self;

(2) being omnipotent and omniscient, he is at the same time different from it;

(3) and in each and every act of the self, including the worldly ones, Śiva, along with the self, performs those acts for the sake of the self (*CiÑāCi.* 1.27; and Śivāgrayogī's commentary).

In fact, *Śivajñānabodha* 5 brings out this idea very succinctly.

Among these three modes, the third one is a special contribution of the *Civañāṇapōtam* to religiophilosophical thought. For, though the first two – namely, Śiva existing different from the self and at the same time pervading it – are held by other schools of Śaivism, the third one is not encountered elsewhere (*CiÑāCi.* 91). It is explained further that just as the self pervading the entire body does not become the body, so also Śiva, who is all-pervasive, becomes neither the objects nor the self (*CiÑāCi.* 93).

As *Civañāṇapōtam* 8 beautifully and succinctly says, "in order that the self sees [Śiva first] sees and then shows [to the self]," it is one of the greatest compassionate acts of Śiva and hence a blessing by him on the self (Śivāgrayogī's commentary on *CiÑāCi.* 5.1). To the objection "since both Śiva and the self are conscious where is the need for one to make the other know," Śivāgrayogī's answers that just as the eye that is bright sees only through the help of the sun, so also the self knows only through the help of Śiva. The example of the self inhabiting the body and directing all its functions is very often used in the *Śivajñānabodha* tradition (*CiÑāPō.* 11; *CiÑāCi.* 2.3; Śivāgrayogī on *CiÑāCi.* 2.3 calls this relation *tādātmya*, "becoming one with it"). This, in a nutshell, is the nondual relationship that exists between Śiva and the self. There is no question of any such relation between Śiva and the material universe because Śiva is not its material cause, but only the efficient cause.

Coming to the great stalwart Umāpati of the 14th century, who is one of the greatest authors and the system builders of the *Śivajñānabodha* tradition, we see in his *Civappirakācam* where, at the beginning, he promises to expound the

> doctrine of Śaiva Siddhānta which has the special feature of being nondual (Tam. *attuvitam*) that is different from *bheda* (doctrine of difference), *abheda* (doctrine of non-difference) and *bhedābheda* (doctrine of both difference and non-difference) and which is, further, the essence of Vedānta. (*CiPira.* 7)

What is to be noted here is that Śaiva Siddhānta (Tam. *cittāntam*) is nondualistic (in its outlook; Skt. *advaita*; Tam. *attuvitam*), and that it is the essence of the Vedānta. He also states that Śaiva Siddhānta is vedic (fully according with the Veda, and hence he calls it *vaitika caivam; CiPira.* 31). The *Civappirakācam* (99) states that Śaiva Siddhānta is the sum and substance of the meaning conveyed in the Upaniṣads. The *Civañāṇacittiyār* (266 and 267), which clearly state that "there is nothing that can be explained other than what the Veda (Śruti) and *Śaivāgama* had already explained" (*CiÑāCi.* 266, 267), echo-

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ing the well-known statement of Śrīkaṇṭha, "We do not find any difference between the Veda and the Śaiva Āgamas" (*ŚrīKaBh.* 2.2.38). In fact, Śrīkaṇṭha was the first to write a commentary on the *Brahmasūtra* purely from the Śaiva point of view, basing his arguments fully on the entire vedic corpus and the Śaiva Āgamas.

According to the *Civañāṇacittiyār*, liberation is nothing but abiding at the holy feet of Śiva, and it does not discuss much about the relationship that prevails in that state (*CiÑāCi.* 263, 264). So, it is evident that Umāpati is the first to bring Śaiva Siddhānta and Vedānta into comparison and expound the former as a refinement of the latter. The reason is not hard to surmise. For, in the 14th century, when Umāpati lived the Vedānta system, especially the Advaita school was very popular and powerful in South India, as it was given an impetus by Vidyāraṇya and other stalwarts in the Vijayanagara period. The nondual relation is explained to be analogous to that which exists between the sunlight and the innate light of the eye and also to that of the sunlight and the moonlight. In both these cases moonlight and the natural light of the eye are fully subservient to and dependent on the sunlight. Such is the relation of Śiva with the self (*CiÑāPō.* 5; see also Śivāgrayogī's commentary on *ŚiJñ.* 5).

Civañāṇacuvāmikaḷ, the 18th-century stalwart of Śaiva Siddhānta who enriched its literature by many of his compositions, very much utilized Advaita Vedānta notions, for example, in his commentary *Māpāṭiyam* on the *Civañāṇapōtam*.

Spiritual Discipline

In the domain of spiritual disciplines, the *Śivajñānabodha* prescribes meditation on the five-syllable *mantra* (*pañcākṣara*). Further, unflinching devotion to and faith in (Tam. *ayarā aṉpu*) the grace of Śiva is a basic prerequisite for a liberation seeker. The *Śivajñānabodha* says, "Since Śiva is the highest benefactor for the self one should have strongest faith in him" (*ŚiJñ.* 11). Though the rite of initiation (*dīkṣā*) is not directly mentioned in the text, we find that the liberation seeker should approach a qualified *guru* who instructs him on the overpowering nature of the psychophysical bodies and the necessity of coming out of their clutch. This turn of mind on the part of the aspirant is caused by the fall of grace of Śiva on him called *śaktipāta*. Though *Civañāṇapōtam* and its commentary *Civañāṇacittiyār* do not explicitly speak about *śaktipāta*, commentators such as Śivāgrayogī give more details about it (see e.g. *SaṃgBh.* 8). According to Śivāgrayogī, when *karmasāmya* (equality of good and bad deeds or *puṇya* and *pāpa*) and *malaparipāka* (ripening of impurity) take place, the *īśvaraśakti* (power) that awakens the self's *jñāna* (knowledge) falls on the self. Soon, the *tirodhānaśakti* (power of concealing) that conceals the actual nature of the self stops its function. For that self from whom the *tirodhānaśakti* had withdrawn its power and influence gets *vairāgya* (freedom) from the transmigration. Thus awakened, the self becomes anxious and seeks to see Śiva's feet; eventually it is impatient to see his feet and to be free from bondage and seeks a *guru* who makes it see Śiva. At that time Śiva, fully manifesting himself on the body of *ācārya*, graces the self according to its level of *śaktipāta*. For those of *tīvrataraśaktipāta*, the gracing is as follows: it purifies him all five *kalās* and joins him with the highest reality, which is without name (*nāmarahita*), which cannot be reached by *pratyakṣa*, or *anumāna* and is beyond 36 *tattvas*, and is *akhaṇḍākārasaccidānandādvaya-paripūrṇaparaśiva* (the supreme Śiva who is the plenum and the nondual indivisible existence-consciousness-bliss absolute). The *guru* instructs the disciple that actually he is not the self under bondage, but due to ignorance his self has been overpowered by the sense organs in such a way that the self's real nature is not manifested. The *guru* also instructs him that in order to get rid of the overpowering influence of the material world and the sense organs, he should contemplate the *pañcākṣaramantra*, which enables him perceive (and eventually realize) Śiva in his own self through the eye of consciousness whereby its attachment to the fleeting matter is severed, and it abides at the holy feet of Śiva (*ŚiJñ.* 9; *CiÑāPō.* 9, 59, 60). The self, then, experiences the supreme bliss as well as its oneness with Śiva. The realized self moves about in the world in such a way that all its activities are entirely dependent on Śiva (*ŚiJñ.* 10; *CiÑāPō.* 10).

Another noteworthy feature of the *Śivajñānabodha* text is that serving the devotees of Śiva and serving in the temple of Śiva are also prescribed as efficacious means for attaining liberation. Wearing the attire of a Śaiva *yogin* such as the matted locks and the bark garments as well as

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following other simple but firm devotional practices are also recommended and are said to contribute to the realization of Śiva. Such a view is not generally encountered in the earlier phase of Śaiva Siddhānta that we saw above.

It may be said that the *Śivajñānabodha* tradition has to a large extent toned down the emphasis on elaborate rituals and the initiation ceremonies and in their stead has recommended simple means firmly based on supreme devotion to Śiva, which can be followed by many people. As we have seen earlier, only meditation on the five-syllable *mantra* (*pañcākṣara*), which is the vocal representation of Śiva, is recommended as the highest religious practice and as the supreme means to attain liberation. We do not find any reference to the *prāsādamantra* (a powerful *mantra* evoking Śiva) or other such *mantras* that are recommended in the Āgama texts. These special features of *Śivajñānabodha* can probably be traced to the influence of texts such as the *Vāyavīyasaṃhitā* and other Śaiva Purāṇas, which view requires further research.

Concept of *Mukti* in Śaiva Siddhānta

The concept of liberation (*mukti, mokṣa*) in Śaiva Siddhānta is central to its doctrinal position, and one finds a steady and interesting evolution of this concept during the course of a millennium. Just as we have seen briefly the development and the consequent modifications of some of the basic doctrines, the view of *mukti* shows a remarkable variation at each period, as it has absorbed different views and incorporated them into its mainstream.

Mukti in the Second Phase of Śaiva Siddhānta

Many texts and commentaries belonging to the tradition of *Civañāṇapōtam*, for example, the two *Caṅkarpanirākaraṇam* texts composed by Umāpati and by Maraiñāṇacampantar (16th cent.), refute the view of *mukti* held by the earlier *ācāryas*. The *Civañāṇapōtam* speaks of *mukti* as "existing in a nondifferent relationship at the holy feet of Śiva" (*CiÑāPō.* 8). Here we do not see any mention of equality or similarity with Śiva, but only a nondual relationship between Śiva and the liberated self. In the context of explaining the status of the realized self the *Civañāṇapōtam* similarly says that

> the liberated self becomes free from (the clutches) of the *mala* and *māyā* by realizing intensely its oneness with Śiva and that he (Śiva) himself exists as the self. (*CiÑāPō.* 10)

Here we notice a sort of nondual relationship that at the same time maintains the difference between Śiva and the self. Again (*CiÑāPō.* 11), we see the repetition of the view that the self abides at the holy feet of Śiva, which is attained by intense and unflinching devotion.

The *Civañāṇacittiyār* explains further that

> [h]e (Śiva) comes as the preceptor (*guru*), removes the *mala* that covers the self, and keeps it at his holy feet after making it himself. (*CiÑāCi.* 253, 264)

For, the state of *mukti* according to Śaiva Siddānta is the state where

> Śiva, after removing the *mala* that covers the self and washing it with the holy water of supreme *jñāna* showers the nectar of bliss (*ānandavāri*) on it and keeps it at his holy feet. (*CiÑāCi.* 268)

Thus *mukti* is held to be existing as Śiva himself abiding at his holy feet. In all these it is Śiva himself who comes in the form of the *ācārya* and removes the *mala* of the self so that its (innate) *śivatva* (*śiva*-hood) shines forth.

We also get an explanation in the same text with more details:

> Due to the supreme *jñāna* the liberation seeker cuts asunder both merit (*puṇya*) and sin (*pāpa*), attains liberation, perceives everywhere the beautiful sun of Śiva shining, remaining without any desire he merges in the pervasion of Śiva and after the destruction of the physical body exists similar to Śiva. (*CiÑāCi.* 283)

A clear view of the state of *mukti* is found in the *Civañāṇacittiyār* (303), which states that by the intense practice of devotion and regular worship by the self, Śiva pervades the entire self by becoming manifest in his inner self just as fire completely pervades the heated iron, and Śiva makes it as himself and grants it his own form and pervasion. In all these passages, we notice that a sort of *bhedābheda* (difference and non-difference) relation between Śiva and the liberated self is main-

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tained despite the fact that Śiva makes the liberated self as himself (*CiPira.* 7; see also above).

In the context of discussing the means to attain liberation, we find that only knowledge (Tam. *ñāṇam*; Skt. *jñāna*) is efficacious in making the self reach the holy feet of the Lord (*CiÑāCi.* 278).

Another text by name of *Tiruneṟivilakkam* of unknown authorship, most probably belonging to the 15th century, speaks of the highest state mostly in the same strain as that of the *Civappirakācam*. According to it, the highest truth of Śaiva Siddhānta consists of the knowledge that the self is not only just one with but at the same time nondifferent (*advaita*) from Śiva, a view that is the innermost meaning of the Vedānta (*TiNeVi.* 1). Here, the word *adavita* is interpreted as not nondual, as with the Vedānta system of Śaṅkara, but as two entities existing in the relation of nondifference. This idea was fully developed later in the 18th century by one of the great exponents of Śaiva Siddhānta, Civañāṉacuvāmikaḷ.

We see more explanations in the texts of such *ācāryas* as Śivāgrayogī (16th cent.), who explains that the state of nondifference between Śiva and the self is ever present and that the self is always nondifferent from Śiva. But due to the covering of *mala*, this highest state is not experienced by it. Therefore, after the removal of *mala*, the nondifference (*ananyatva*) shines forth and manifests in all its splendor. The eternal knowledge and bliss (*nityajñānānanda*), which are the innate qualities of the self, are manifested in the state of *mukti*. Further, at the destruction of the physical body, the realized self becomes all pervasive, and it fully merges in the pervasion of Śiva, just as salt when dissolved in water exists along with it. Śivāgrayogī also says that when the supreme power (*śakti*) of Śiva shines forth and eventually manifests fully in the realized self, it fully realizes Śiva as nondifferent from it through its *svarūpajñāna* (innate knowledge) transcending the limited knowledge generated by mental modes (*vṛttijñāna*). He concludes that this is the final state of *mukti*, and any realization or attainment less than that will bring forth rebirth (Śivāgrayogī's commentary on *CiÑāCi.* 8.38).

Śivāgrayogī explains that *mukti* consists not only of the removal of all bondages but also of remaining one with Śiva, who is undivided supreme bliss in the same way as the waves remain in the ocean after the storm subsides (*SaṃgBh.* 10). He gives a brief analysis of the word "identity" (*aikya*) and finally concludes that *aikya* means identity with a difference, which is equivalent to nondifference with a tinge of difference (*SaṃgBh.* 10). He also states that *aikya* actually means the manifestation of all the innate supreme qualities of the self that were previously covered by the *mala*. We see that in all these explanations, Śivāgrayogī is very much influenced by Śrīkaṇṭha, who is the earliest Śaiva *ācārya* to write a commentary on the *Brahmasūtras* from the Śaiva point of view. To drive home this point, Śivāgrayogī gives the example of the quality and its possessor and that of the light and its source. He states that the self in the state of *mukti* possesses unconditional similarity with Śiva (*nirapekṣaśivasamatva*) and experiences unlimited self-bliss (*paramānandasvānubhava*) and eternalness (*nityatva*). It is obvious that these views distinguish the concept of *mukti* held by the Śaiva Siddhānta system from those of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika (Śivāgrayogī's commentary on *CiÑāCi.* 23).

Another great Śaiva *ācārya*, Nigamajñānadeva (who was also known as Maṟaiñāṉacampantar, whom we may call Nigamajñāna I), and his disciple bearing the same name, Nigamajñāna II, who were contemporaries of Śivāgrayogī, have contributed much to the consolidation and propagation of the Śaiva Siddhānta by composing many texts in Sanskrit as well as in Tamil elucidating all branches of the Śaiva ritual system and doctrines (see T. Ganesan, 2009).

Aikkiyaviyal (Discussion about Identity [between Śiva and the self]), *Paramōpatēcam* (Supreme Teaching), and *Patipacupācappaṇuval* (Discourse on *Pati*, *Paśu*, and *Pāśa*), are some of the texts composed by Nigamajñāna I. Among these, the first is exclusively devoted to the establishment of the view that in the liberated state, the self experiences its own innate supreme bliss and not that of Śiva (*śivānanda*). He argues that it is totally against tradition – the Vedas, the Āgamas, and the Purāṇas – to hold that the liberated self enjoys the bliss of Śiva. He strongly condemns those who believe otherwise. Nigamajñāna II in his Sanskrit commentary called *Śivajñānabodhopanyāsa* on the *Śivajñānabodha* explains liberation as "similarity between Śiva and the self as expressed in the statement 'verily this self is Śiva' just like the statement 'the [animal] *gavaya* is the same as the cow'" (see T. Ganesan, 2009). Interestingly, he gives 14 types of possible interpretations for the word "*aikya*," which occurs in the *Śivajñānabodha* (10),

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and he finally makes it clear that the state of liberation consists of complete similarity between Śiva and the self, which very much resembles the *śivasamavāda* (the doctrine that the soul is equal to Śiva). According to him, identity (*aikya*) between Śiva and the self is nothing but a concomitant relation without beginning and without end (*ŚiJñUpany.* 10).

Nigamajñāna II also states that to interpret that the liberated self enjoys the bliss of Śiva (*śivānanda*) amounts to thinking that it experiences the supreme mother of the entire universe, namely, the *śakti* who is inseparable from Śiva, a view that, he argues, is a sacrilege. As the self has its own innate bliss, it is but reasonable that it experiences it in the highest state of *mukti* when the covering of the *mala* is completely removed (see *ŚiJñUpany.* 10.). This view, that the liberated self experiences its own bliss (*svānandānubhava*), established by Nigamajñāna I and II, was vehemently criticized by another contemporary Śaiva teacher, namely, Guru Ñāṇacampantar, in his brief text *Muttiniccayam*. He concludes that the liberated self can only experience the bliss of Śiva and nothing else. This criticism was carried over by his disciple Velliyampalavāṇattampirāṉ of the 17th century in his shorter and longer commentaries on his teacher's text.

The 18th-century stalwart of Śaiva Siddhānta, Civañāṇacuvāmika, in his opus magnum, *Māpāṭiyam* on the *Civañāṇapōtam* of Meykaṇṭār, analyzes this concept in a detailed way. He also establishes that in the state of *mukti*, the liberated self exists as Śiva, and that this relationship is one of nondifference (*ananya*): In that state, the self experiences everything by existing as Śiva himself. All these are possible only by the grace of Śiva. According to him, this is the conclusion of the Āgamas, and he cites authorities to establish his view. (See the verse quoted by Nigamajñāna II in his *Śivajñānabodhopanyāsa).*

> *śivārkaśaktidīdhityā samarthīk tacidd śā*
> *śivaṃ śaktyādibhiḥ sārdhaṃ paśyatyātmā*
> *gatāvṛtiḥ.*
>
> By the brilliant rays of the sun which is Śiva and with the aid of the consciousness-eyesight that has been fully enabled [by the grace of Śiva] the self whose covering of *mala* has been completely removed, perceives Śiva directly along with his Śakti. (*ŚiJñUpany.* 10)

Śrīkaṇṭha, referred to earlier, though he does not cite this verse, but holds the same view as expressed in this passage; according to him, in the state of liberation, the self experiences supreme bliss through the highest and most purified mind.

In conclusion, the *ācāryas* of the Śaiva Siddhānta tradition agree with the fact that *mukti* consists of being Śiva and experiencing the supreme bliss as Śiva. They also agree that it is effected only by the supreme grace of Śiva, and Śrīkaṇṭha, the earliest commentator on the *Brahmasūtras*, says that it is the mark of Śiva's supreme love and grace toward the self that he bestows *śiva*-hood on whoever meditates on him intensely with unflinching devotion (*ŚrīKaBh.* 4.1.3.).

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